

CATO IN ENGLAND: TRANSLATING LATIN SAYINGS FOR MORAL AND LINGUISTIC INSTRUCTION¹

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Thanks to the efforts of Foster Watson and T.W. Baldwin, we are well informed about the curriculum at English grammar schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.² In the early stages of his training, the school boy – to quote the words of Baldwin – “gets oral composition by memorizing phrases for all the ordinary operations of life, learns the simplest rules of grammar, studies simple authors as models for speaking and writing, and constructs simple themes as his written composition.”³ The keyword here is clearly *simple* and it goes without saying that school boys in this stage of their training were not yet ready to read complicated classical authors such as Vergil, Ovid, or Horace. But which authors, then, were considered suitable for the pupils of the lower grammar school? Almost all the surviving statutes of English schools offered the same reading program: pupils would start with the *Dicta Catonis*, move on to the Latin Aesop, and subsequently turn to Terence. The advantage of these three authors, and certainly as they were presented to the pupils, was that they offered a combination of relatively simple Latin with moral instruction, making them useful, to paraphrase Erasmus’s judgment, for the teacher who wants to safeguard his pupils from barbarisms in their language as well as in their behaviour.⁴

This omnipresence of Terence, Aesop and the *Dicta Catonis* in the educational system obviously stimulated the publication of numerous editions and translations once the printing press was introduced into England. A study of the English-Latin versions of Terence has illustrated

¹ I am deeply grateful to Robert Cummings for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² Foster Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660. Their Curriculum and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908; repr. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968); T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare’s Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944).

³ T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare’s Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, Vol. I, 92–93.

⁴ See Erasmus’ dedicatory epistle of the *Opuscula aliquot* to John de Neve, published in *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P.S. Allen, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906–58), Vol. 4, No. 298.

how the editors, translators and printers experimented with the mise-en-page to serve the different uses made of Terentian comedies in and outside the classroom.⁵ The present essay focuses on one of the two other texts read by basically every English school boy of the Renaissance, namely the anonymous collection of sayings entitled *Dicta Catonis*, which probably dates back to the third century AD and was used as a primary reader from the Carolingian Renaissance until the eighteenth century.⁶ The didactic use of this text led to twenty-five printings in England and Scotland before 1640, including more than fifteen editions of the most popular version, namely the edition prepared by Erasmus and printed for the first time in a volume entitled *Opuscula aliquot Erasmo Roterodamo castigatore et interprete*, published in Leuven in 1514. These *Opuscula* were an annotated edition of several collections of moral sayings intended for school boys, who – according to contemporary critics such as Vives – would learn valuable life lessons from it, distinguishing the truly good from the truly bad and enjoying its wisdom as an antidote against the caprices of Fortune.⁷ Besides the *Dicta Catonis*, Erasmus included the *Mimi Publani* (a collection of maxims from the first century AD), the *Septem Sapientum celebra dicta* (a collection of prose *sententiae* translated from Greek), a Latin translation of Isocrates' *Ad demonicum*, and other similarly improving texts. Because of their joint publication, the other texts, which could also be used for instruction on a linguistic and moral level, became so closely linked with the *Dicta Catonis* that the title 'Cato' frequently referred to the whole collection rather than to the *Dicta Catonis* alone.⁸

⁵ Demmy Verbeke, "Types of Bilingual Presentation in the English-Latin Terence" (to appear in *Bilingual Europe: Latin and Vernacular Cultures ca. 1300–1800*, ed. Jan Bloemendal, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, Leiden: Brill).

⁶ For a general discussion of the history and continuing success of the *Dicta Catonis* see, for instance, the introduction in Wayland Johnson Chase, *The Distichs of Cato. A Famous Medieval Textbook. Translated from the Latin with Introductory Sketch*, University of Wisconsin Studies in the Social Sciences and History 7 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922) and Fons van Buuren, *Levenslessen van Cato: het verhaal van een schoolboek* (Amsterdam: De Buitenkant, 1994).

⁷ See Juan Luis Vives, "De ratione studii puerilis," in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Gregorius Majansius, 8 vols. (Valencia: Benedictus Monfort, 1782), Vol. 1, 265.

⁸ See T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, Vol. I, 596 and 603. A description of the 1514 edition is found in Wouter Nijhoff and M.E. Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540*, 3 vols. (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923–42), Vol. 1, 199–200; Marie-José Desmet-Goethals, "De *Catonis disticha moralia* uitgegeven door D. Erasmus en door L. Crucius," *Onze Alma Mater* 23–3 (1969): 168–184 (espec. 168–169) and John Archer Gee, "Berthelet's Latin-English publication of the *Apophthegmata Graeciae Sapientum* and other sayings formerly edited by Erasmus," *Studies in Philology*

Besides these editions of the Latin text, we also need to mention four English publications which can be connected with the *Dicta Catonis* but should not be considered editions or translations of it. The first is a bilingual volume entitled *Dicta sapientum* and printed by Thomas Berthelet in around 1527.⁹ This book contains an abridged English translation of the *Mimi Publiani* and the *Septem Sapientum celebra dicta* as they were edited, together with the *Dicta Catonis*, in Erasmus' 1514 *Opuscula aliquot*. Since the volume does not, however, contain a translation of Cato's distichs as such, we can leave it aside in this study. The next three publications refer to Cato in their titles, but have for the rest very little to do with the third-century collection of maxims. The first is the *Cato Censorius Christianus* of Théodore de Bèze, a small collection of Latin poems about human vices first printed in Geneva in 1591 and reprinted the following year in Oxford.¹⁰ A second *Cato Christianus* is interesting for our understanding of the English school system because it was written by Richard Mulcaster, who began his teaching career as first headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School in London (where he taught Edmund Spenser) and was appointed High Master of St Paul's School in 1596.¹¹ The book was intended as a companion to his *Cathechismus Paulinus*, published shortly before as a basic reader for the first year pupils in St Paul's School; the *Cato Christianus*

35–2 (1938): 164–177 (espec. 167–168). For a discussion of Erasmus' textual notes, see Louis A. Perraud, "A Document of Humanist Education: Erasmus's Commentary on the *Dicticha Catonis*," *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 9 (1988): 83–92 and Marie-José Desmet-Goethals, "Die Verwendung der Kommentare von Badius-Mancinellus, Erasmus und Corderius in der 'Disticha Catonis'-Ausgabe von Livinus Crucius," in *Der Kommentar in der Renaissance*, ed. August Buck and Otto Herding, DFG Kommission für Humanismusforschung Mitteilung 1 (Boppard: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1975), 73–88.

⁹ *Dicta sapientum. The sayenges of the wyse men of Grece in Latin with the Englysshe folowyng* (London: Thomas Berthelet, [1527?]) (STC 10478.7). It is discussed in detail in John Arthur Gee, "Berthelet's Latin-English publication of the *Apophthegmata Graeciae Sapientum*."

¹⁰ *Cato censorius christianus* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1592) (STC 2003). A unique copy of this collection is preserved in the Winchester College Fellows Library, and I wish to thank its librarian, Geoffrey Day, for providing me with further information concerning it. For more about the first edition of this collection (and the reprints in de Bèze's *Poemata varia* from 1597 onwards), see Frédéric Gardy, *Bibliographie des oeuvres théologiques, littéraires, historiques et juridiques de Théodore de Bèze. Publiée avec la collaboration d'Alain Dufour*, Travaux d'humanisme et renaissance XLI (Geneva: Droz, 1960), 204–205.

¹¹ *Cato Christianus. In quem conijciuntur ea omnia, que in sacris literis ad parentum, puerorumque pietatem videntur maxime pertinere* (London: Valentine Simmes, [1600]) (STC 18249.5). For more information concerning the author, see William Barker, "Mulcaster, Richard (1531/2–1611)," in the *ODNB*.

served as a reader in the second year.¹² Mulcaster explains in his foreword that he wished to provide a text which would help the pupils to learn Latin without exposing them to pagan thought. With this in mind, he wrote this book of verses discussing biblical matters and named it after the wisdom of Cato and the truth of Christ, hence its title, *Cato Christianus*.¹³ Finally, *The schoole of slovenrie: or, Cato turnd wrong side outward* is in fact an English rendering of Friedrich Dedekind's *Grobianus* by a translator known only by his initials 'R.F.'¹⁴ The book is advertised as a 'reversed' Cato because it is a parody of conduct manuals. It advocates, for example, coughing into one's neighbour's face and belching and breaking wind freely.

This brings us to the subject of the present study, namely the English versions of the *Dicta Catonis* printed before 1641, which are listed in appendix. Basing our corpus on the extant editions catalogued in the ESTC, we can distinguish ten different translations of Cato, most of which were reprinted several times.¹⁵ The earliest English translation made available in print is the verse rendering by Benedict Burgh (Appendix, no. 1), which probably dates back to the 1440s and which circulated in manuscript before it was printed by Caxton in about 1476, 1477 and 1483.¹⁶ It was reprinted once more as a sort of historical curiosity in 1558, annexed to John Bury's English translation of Isocrates' *Ad demonicum*.¹⁷ We are

¹² *Cato Christianus*, "Catonem hunc classi in schola Paulina secundae adiucavi, ut Catechismum primae," A4^r.

¹³ See also the opening poem about the "Catonis Christiani argumentum & methodus" in *Cato Christianus*, 1–2.

¹⁴ *The Schoole of slovenrie: Or, Cato turnd wrong side outward. Translated out of Latine into English verse, to the vse of all English Christendome, except court and cittie. By R.F. Gent.* (London: Valentine Simmes, 1605) (STC 6457). This translation is discussed by Barbara Correll in *The End of Conduct. Grobianus and the Renaissance Text of the Subject* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), xii–xiv, who also offers further references for the reception of *Grobianus* in England.

¹⁵ Henriette Palmer, in her *List of English Editions and Translations of Greek and Latin Classics Printed before 1641*, mentions a number of extra translations licensed to various individuals, but apparently none is extant.

¹⁶ Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 18; George D. Painter, *William Caxton. A Quincentenary Biography of England's First Printer* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976), 93 and Max Förster, "Die Burghsche Cato-Paraphrase," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 115 (1905): 298–323 and 116 (1906): 25–40. We know little about Burgh but see Douglas Gray, "Burgh, Benedict (d. in or before 1483)," in the *ODNB*.

¹⁷ *The Godly advertisement or good counsel of the famous orator Isocrates, entitled Paraenesis to Demonicus: whereto is annexed Cato in old English meter* (London: William Copland, 1557 [i.e. 1558]) (STC 14276). Whereas the fifteenth-century printings of Burgh's translation maintain the traditional order of the *Parvus Cato* followed by the *Magnus Cato*, the 1558 reprint switches them around and omits Burgh's dedicatory note at the end of the *Parvus Cato*.

informed about the initial audience of the translation by William Caxton, who states in the preface to his own Cato translation of 1484 that “Master Benet Burgh” prepared it for the instruction of William Bouchier, son of Henry, who was created Earl of Essex in 1461.¹⁸ When Caxton reprinted the translation more than 30 years after its composition, he clearly had a more general audience in mind, namely that created by the new world of print.

Burgh’s translation has been characterized by Henry Lathrop as “diffuse and stodgy.”¹⁹ Each Latin distich is translated into seven verses in “balade ryal” metre, the result being, again according to Lathrop, that “all the force of the original, which depended wholly on the pithy brevity of the axioms, is washed away in the shallow and vapid flood of Burgh’s verbosity.” The prolixity of Burgh’s version, which after all was typical of the didactic writing of its time, is well illustrated by the rendition of *dictum* 3.12: “Uxorem fuge ne ducas sub nomine dotis, / Nec retinere velis, si coeperit esse molesta,” translated in a modern English translation as: “For dowry take not thyself a wife, / Nor keep her with thee if she spoils thy life.”²⁰ Burgh’s rendering is as follows:

Wedde not a wyf for hire enheritance
 For she wol cast it ful often in thy berd
 And yf she be noyant and ful of greuance
 Constreine hire neuer to abide in thy yerd
 Of chastisement It is a cursed swerd
 To kepe suche oon that wol ay a twyte
 For he is at ease that of suche oon is quyte. ([20^r])

¹⁸ William Caxton, Prologue to the *Caton*: “for the erudicion of my lord Bousher sone and heyr at that tyme to my lord the erle of Estsex” (2^r). Biographical details in Linda Clark, “Bouchier, Henry, first earl of Essex (c. 1408–1483),” *ODNB*; William Painter, *William Caxton*, 93–94; Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 17–18. It has been suggested that it was actually Burgh himself who had requested the printing of this translation since he might well have known Caxton, given his position as canon of St Stephen’s Chapel in Westminster, but this remains unproved. See William Blades, *The Biography and Typography of William Caxton, England’s First Printer* (London: Trubner & Co., 1877), 203.

¹⁹ Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 18. Goldberg’s and Förster’s evaluation are similarly negative: “Burgh’s Gedicht ist durchweg ohne dichterischen Gehalt” (Goldberg, *Die Catonischen Distichen*, 45) and “die dichterische Bedeutung dieser nüchternen, langatmigen und unbeholfenen Reimerei [ist] gering” (Förster, “Die Burghsche Cato-Paraphrase,” 298).

²⁰ Wayland Johnson Chase, *The Distichs of Cato*, 31. I follow the numbering of the standard critical edition by Marcus Boas and Henricus Johannes Botschuyver, *Disticha Catonis. Recensuit ac apparatu critico instruxit Marcus Boas. Opus post Marci Boas mortem edendum curavit Henricus Johannes Botschuyver* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952).

Another fifteenth-century translation was provided by Caxton himself in 1484 (Appendix, no. 2). As his source Caxton used an anonymous French intermediary translation with a Latin title, *Disticha de moribus*, published by Martin Huss in c.1480.²¹ The difference with Burgh's translation, beyond the fact that it is in prose rather than verse, is immediately obvious if one compares the two versions of distich 3.12:

Thou oughtest not to take a wyf ne to coueyte hir for hyr dowayr / for hir rychesse ne for hir noblesse / but thou oughtest to chese and take hyr for hyr vertues and good condycyons / and for cause of hir good worshypful and honeste lygnage or kyndede / and specyally whan she hath a good moder / for the doughters folowen ofte the condycyone and maners of the moders / but whan thou arte wedded of by aduenture she doeth to the somme moleste or greef / that is to say yf she be an harlotte or an aduoultrere / thou oughtest to flee fro hyr and to put hir oute fro thy felowshyp / and knowe thou after ryght canon and cyuyl that thou ne oughtest for to leue and put hir fro the but onelye for aduoultrye / For knowe thou that it is a souerayn gyfte of god for to haue a good and lawful wyf / ([56^v])

In Caxton's own *Cato*, the Latin title of each saying is thus followed by an extensive commentary in English prose, which is translated from the French source. In other words, it is not a translation of simply the text of the *Dicta Catonis*, but of a French translation with commentary. This no doubt accounts in part for Caxton's decision to produce a second translation, where the commentary would strongly enforce the moral content, whereas Burgh's version could simply be read as a collection of English didactic poems. Moreover, the latter was incomplete. Caxton, following the French source, expands his version into a much more substantial text.

Almost sixty years later another translation appeared, Richard Taverner's *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami unę cum annotationibus et scholiis* (Appendix, no. 3).²² It is similar to

²¹ For a brief discussion of Caxton's interdependent activities as a printer and translator, see A.E.B. Coldiron, "William Caxton," in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English. Volume I: To 1550*, ed Roger Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 160–169.

²² Taverner translated several of Erasmus' works. See Andrew W. Taylor, "Taverner, Richard (1505?–1575)," in the *ODNB*; Charles Read Baskervill, "Taverner's *Garden of Wisdom* and the *Apophthegmata* of Erasmus," *Studies in Philology* 29–2 (1932): 149–159; John K. Yost, "Taverner's Use of Erasmus and the Protestantization of English Humanism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 23–3 (1970): 266–276; E.J. Devereux, "Richard Taverner's Translations of Erasmus," *The Library. Fifth Series* 19 (1964): 212–214; and Doris V. Falk, "Proverbs and the Polonius Destiny," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18–1 (1967): 23–36.

Caxton's version in that it offers a translation of a commentary accompanying the distichs, although this time they themselves are left untranslated; this is for didactic purposes. Taverner indicates in his preface addressed "to the tendre youth of Englande" that the verse of the original must be "obscure and ful of difficultie" for the common child (a1^v). He therefore decided not to translate the Latin distichs word by word (an exercise better supervised by the class instructor), but to offer the pupils help with understanding the Latin through explicatory notes based on the ones prepared by Erasmus. The study of these notes indicates Taverner did not hesitate to add some glosses of his own or to expand on the information provided by Erasmus.²³ This point is illustrated through a comparison of Erasmus' and Taverner's comments on distich 3.12, whereby it becomes immediately clear that Taverner uses more words to get the message across, and that this is not entirely attributable to linguistic differences between synthetic Latin and analytic English:

Fuge, id est, caue ne ducas uxorem dotis causa. Et si duxeris dotatam, ne dotis respectu eam retineas, si tibi grauis sit sed contempta dote repudies. Quamquam id apud cristianos non habet locum.²⁴

Beware and flee this thyng, that thou mary not a wyfe for the goodes sake that she bryngeth with her. No kepe her not, if she begyn to be greueuse and comberouse unto the, but let her go with that she brought a gods name rather then thou sholdest be disquieted all thy lyfe longe with her. Here shall ye note that by the lawes of the Romaines, afore the religion of Christ came amonges them, they myght at theyr pleasure chyfte a waye theyr wyues, if they lyked them not and take newe. But christen men can not do so. wherfore they ought to be the more diligent and cyrcumspecte to chuse suche as they may lyue in quiet with. (xv^v-xvi^r)

In 1545, another version of the *Dicta Catonis* with commentary based on the same source text appeared under the title *Preceptes of Cato with annotations of D. Erasmus of Roterodame, very profytable for all men* (Appendix, no. 4). The translator was Robert Barrant, who chose not to include the Latin, but to offer an English translation in rhyming distichs together with a translation of Erasmus' commentary:

Cato 12: *Beware thou marie not a wife for her dowries sake. / And if she be shrewish, soone her from the shake.*

²³ Taverner did the same in his *Garden of Wisdom* and other 'translations' based on Erasmus. See Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 70–71 and Charles Read Baskervill, "Taverner's *Garden of Wisdom* and the *Apophthegmata* of Erasmus."

²⁴ *Catonis praecepta moralia recognita atque interpretata ab Erasmo Roterodamo* ([Leipzig: Schumann, 1518]), [25].

Erasmus: Take hede thou wed not a wife for the sake or cause of her dowrie. And if thou dooe marrie one riche and wel dowred, reteine her not for the respecte of her dowrie, if she be a shrewe but her dowrie set a parte, thou shalt forsake her. How be it emong Christen menne this precepte is not to bee folowed, nor ought to be allowed. (hiiii^r-hiiii^v)

Despite the fact that Barrant's version is based on the same source text as Taverner's, their publications are quite different owing to the fact that they had different audiences in mind. Barrant does not address the "tendre youth of Englande," but instead dedicates his translation to a certain Sir Thomas Caverden of Bletchingly, Surrey.²⁵ He furthermore explains in his preface to the reader that the *Dicta Catonis* should not only be used for the instruction of schoolboys, but "dooeth worthely deserue to be had in fauour with man woman, and child" (A5r). This intention to reach a broad audience probably explains the omission of the Latin and confirms that there were people in England who read Cato as adults, outside the classroom, just as, for instance, they did in Spain.²⁶

A completely different intention lies behind the publication of *Cato Construed, or Catos precepts, with a familiar and easie interpretation* (Appendix, no. 5). This is an anonymous English version of the Latin-French edition by Matthew Cordier, an educational reformer who had developed a method to help pupils understand their first Latin texts by providing them with a detailed construing and parsing method.²⁷ The English version duplicates Cordier's method and replaces the original French with English.²⁸ The result is a bilingual edition, with a paraphrase of the distich in Latin and English, the *dictum Catonis* in Latin, with some

²⁵ For information on Barrant see J.K. McGinley, "Barrant, Robert (fl. 1546–1553)," in the *ODNB*. His patron is mentioned by James Kelsey McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1968), 222, but little is known about him except for the fact that Henry VIII granted him Northumberland House in London.

²⁶ See Barry Taylor, "Michael Verinus and the *Distichs* of Cato in Spain: a comparative study in reception," in *Latin and Vernacular in Renaissance Spain*, ed. Barry Taylor and Alejandro Coroleu (Manchester: Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Studies, 1999), 73–82.

²⁷ More information about Cordier's educational methods and his version of the *Dicta Catonis* is found in Jules Le Coultre, *Maturin Cordier et les origines de la pédagogie protestante dans les pays de langue française (1530–1564)*, Mémoires de l'Université de Neuchâtel 5 (Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1926) (esp. 75–89) and Elizabeth K. Hudson, "The Colloquies of Maturin Cordier: Images of Calvinist School Life and Thought," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 9–3 (1978): 57–78.

²⁸ Exactly the same procedure is used in Latin-German versions of Cordier's edition. See for instance *Disticha moralia nomine Catonis inscripta cum Germanica interpretatione & ubi opus fuit, declaratione Latina ... ex postrema Matvrini Corderij recognitione* (Leipzig, Iohannes Beyer, 1581).

of Cordier's commentary, also in Latin, followed by a grammatical analysis which includes translation:

Dotis causa uxorem ne duxeris. Marrie not a wife for her greate dowrie sake.

Vxorem fuge, ne ducas sub nomine dotis:
Nec retinere velis, si coeperit esse molesta.

Imo ad mortem usque retinenda est ea, quam semel duxeris, etiam si fuerit molestissima. Nam christiana lege non licet uxorem relinquere, nisi propter eius adulterium.

Fuge [*sub. tu*] *caue*. Beware thou,
Ne ducas vxorem, that thou marrie not a wife
Sub nomine dotis] *id est, causa*, for the cause of a dowrie, for her dowrie sake.

Nec [*sub. tu*] velis] *et noli*. And will not thou
Retinere] *seruare* [*sub. uxorem quantumlibet dotatam*, keepe a Wife although she haue a good dowrie,
Si [*sub. illa*] coeperit] *incoeperit*, if she begin
Esse molesta, to be troublesome (*sub. tibi*) to thee, that is to saie, if she become wicked. (Fv^r)²⁹

Another translation which was clearly intended to serve as a school hand-book is the one by the grammarian and spelling reformer William Bullokar entitled *Aesop's Fables in tru Orthography with Grammar-nots. Her-untoo ar also iooined the short sentences of the wyz Cato im-printed with lyk form and order: both of which Autorz ar translated out-of Latin intoo English* (Appendix, no. 6).³⁰ As a teacher, Bullokar was frustrated with the slow progress of his pupils in reading and writing, which he blamed on the fact that the English spelling contained numerous ambiguities; in other words, there was no one-to-one relation between a letter and its pronunciation. He therefore developed his own reformed alphabet on a phonetic basis, and published a grammar and a reader in this new alphabet so that his system could be taught in schools.³¹ The reader prepared by Bullokar

²⁹ I have been unable to check the first edition (of which the British Library only holds an imperfect copy) and have used the 1584 reprint instead.

³⁰ For biographical information on Bullokar see Vivian Salmon, "Bullokar, William (c. 1531–1609)," in the *ODNB*.

³¹ A succinct description of Bullokar's system is provided by Bornstein in her introduction to William Bullokar, *"Booke at Large"* (1580) and *"Bref Grammar for English"* (1586). *Facsimile Reproductions with an Introduction by Diane Bornstein* (Dolmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), v–xiii. See also R.E. Zachrisson, *The English pronunciation at Shakespeare's time as taught by William Bullokar*, Skrifter Utgivna av Kungl. Humanistika Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala. Band 22 (Uppsala – Leipzig: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri – Otto Harrassowitz, 1927).

contains the *Fables* of Aesop and a continuous translation without any comments of the *Dicta Catonis* in his phonetic spelling. The translator explains in his foreword that he wanted to stay close to the Latin, so that a pupil would be able to compare the Latin text with his translation and immediately see the correspondence between the two:

I hau translated out-of Latin intoo English, but not in the best phras for eng-lish, thouh English be capabl' of the perfect senc thaer-of, and miht ben uzed in the best phras, had not my car ben too kep it somewhat ner the Latin phras, that the English laernor of Latin raeding-ouer thaez Autorz in both langages miht the aezilier confer them toogether in their senc, and the bet-ter understand the on by the other. (B1^v)

The result is – again according to Lathrop's judgment – a Cato in crude verse without any literary value.³² Here is Bullokar's English *dictum* 3.12:

Tak not a wyf in the
respect of hir dower,
[lest repentanc folow]
if she war too-sower. (21)

Since the *Dicta Catonis* was used as a primary reader in schools, the translations also reflect various educational methods. In Bullokar's case, the publication showcases an experiment which did not enjoy much success, but the *Cato translated grammatically* (Appendix, no. 7) by the schoolmaster John Brinsley offers an example of a teaching method which was more widely accepted.³³ This method is double translation, first described by Quintilian and later advised by humanist educational authors, such as Roger Ascham, for the Latin instruction of school boys.³⁴ It consisted of translating a Latin passage into English, then after a suitable interval translating it back from English into Latin, a procedure which if repeated regularly quickly increased a student's grasp of Latin. The problem was, however, the application of this method in a classroom of twenty, thirty, or more pupils as it was impossible for the schoolmaster to correct each time the individual translations of all his students. The solution was to provide model English translations of the common school texts so that

³² Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 229.

³³ For more on Brinsley see John Morgan, "Brinsley, John (bap. 1566, d. in or after 1624)," in the *ODNB*.

³⁴ William E. Miller, "Double Translation in English Humanistic Education," *Studies in the Renaissance* 10 (1963): 163–174; Brinsley's adaptation of this method is explained in Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics*, 293–300.

pupils could correct their own versions through comparison with the model translation before translating the text back into Latin. Brinsley thus produced several translations which could be used for this purpose, including, the *Cato translated grammatically*, which provides an English summary of each distich followed by a prose translation with glosses and alternative translations in the margin, cued by letters in the text:

A wife [is] b not to be married in hope of c Dowrie.

Fly thou [or beware] least thou marry, [or that thou doe not marry] a wife, *d*
vnder the name, [or in regard] of a dowrie.

Neither *e* will thou [or bee thou willing] to retaine [her] if she shall begin to
be *fg* troublesom.

b to be led, or taken.

c portion, or goods.

d in respect of portion, or goods.

e retain thou, or keep her.

f wicked.

g This counsell was Heathenish, not Christian. (19)

The next two translations were not intended to be used as school books. Rather, they are more closely related to Barrant's version in the sense that they aim to reach a wider audience. In John Penkethman's *A handful of honesty, or Cato in English verse* (Appendix, no. 8), the "Aduertisement to the Viewer" that appears opposite the title page states that this is a translation for "yong, and old, high, low and all conditions." Penkethman himself explains in his preface that he is unhappy about the fact that Cato, being in the Latin tongue, is only read by children in school. He feels that the original purpose of the *Dicta Catonis*, namely a general use as a handbook of morals for everyone, should be reinstated and he has therefore translated it into the vernacular so that everyone, even those who do not know Latin, can read it.³⁵ He offers the following translation of distich 3.12, with an accompanying note:

For goods beware thou marry not a wife,
Nor keepe her, if she lead a shrewish life. (B7^r)

³⁵ John Penkethman, "The Translators Preface To The benevolent Perusers": "I therefore considering that the Morall Distichs intituled *Cato* being in the Latine tongue, were learned and read onely in Schooles by Children, and desiring to spend my vacant houres in some commendable study for the benefit of my Countrey, (to which ende especially we are borne) conceiud it a worke of worth to translate the same in our Mother tongue, both for the inst<r>uction of such Parents, and others, as were ignorant of the Latine, and for a generall vse for which they were intended" (A5^r).

Nay rather you must keepe her till death, if you once marry her, though she proue neuer so shrewish or troublesome. For by Christian Law, a man may not leaue his wife for any cause except Adultery. (C8^r)

Penkethman's version is mildly criticized by his successor Richard Baker in his *Cato Variegatus* or *Catoes Morall Distichs: Translated and Paraphras'd, with variations of Expressing, in English verse* (Appendix, no. 9).³⁶ Baker states in his preface that "by tying himselfe, strictly to the words, he could not alwaies, either so fully, or so gracefully expresse the mening: for indeed, the words of one language, cannot alwaies be reached, by the very same words of another" (A3^{r-v}). His solution to this problem is a *Cato variegatus*, whereby each Latin distich is followed by anywhere between two and eighteen different translations in verse. The translator admits that these different renditions could be considered to be "paraphrases or Collateral Conceits" instead of translations, but argues that he is more interested in translating the sense and that it is better to tender the existing variety of judgements with a variety of expressions. His version of distich 3.12 offers two paraphrases:

Take heed thou marry not a wife for Portion:
Nor keepe her longer than she keepes proportion.
Or thus
Take not a wife for wealth: or if thou doe,
If once she grow insulting; let her goe. (66)

Closing the list of English translations of the *Dicta Catonis* is *Marcus Ausonius his foure bookes of morall precepts intituled Cato* (Appendix, no. 10) by Walter Gosnold. The book is dedicated to Thomas Bowes, son and heir of the translator's patron, to encourage him to learn Latin. Gosnold tells him:

And none can I finde (sweet sir) that in my minde will be more pleasing to your gentle nature, for the encouraging of you to the laborious and industrious obtaining of the Latin tongue, where into you are even now entering: or more fitter for your worships tractible disposition, being of very yong, and tender yeeres, and in whom the very sparkes of a philomathy is already seene, then this new translated Poet (A3^r).

³⁶ Baker's translation is discussed in Bartlett Jere Whiting, "Sir Richard Baker's *Cato variegatus* (1636)," in *Humaniora. Essays in Literature, Folklore, Bibliography Honoring Archer Taylor on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Wayland D. Hand and Gustave O. Arlt (Locust Valley, NY: J.J. Augustin Publisher, 1960), 8–16. Also see G.H. Martin, "Baker, Sir Richard (c. 1568–1645)," in the *ODNB*.

In this version, the summary is quoted in Latin, with a translation into English, followed by the Latin *dictum Catonis* and an English verse translation:

Uxor spe dotis non ducenda.

A wife is not to be married in hope of dowry, portion, or goods.

Uxorem fuge, ne ducas sub nomine dotis:

Nec retinere velis, si coeperit esse molesta.

Take not a wife for portion sake

least wicked she doe prove:

or if she falsifie her troth,

admit no more her love. (E1^r)

Despite the youthful dedicatee, this publication most probably did not serve as a handbook in a classroom setting. Gosnold himself indicates that his version could, like those of Barrant, Penkethman, and Baker, be read by “man, woman, or child” (C1^r) and that his main purpose was to bring Latin wit to an English reader: “Methinks some curious Reader, I heare say, / That Latin verse in English, is not fit: / My booke is plaine, and would have if it may, / An English Reader, but a Latin wit” (C2^v).

Our survey of early modern English versions of the *Dicta Catonis* shows that this collection of sayings constituted a very flexible text, used for many purposes and addressed to a varied public. Although basically all the printed translated works mentioned in this essay can be labelled as ‘English versions of Cato,’ closer inspection has brought to light the fact that some are actually original Latin works, some are translations of different Latin source texts, others should be qualified as translations or adaptations of commentaries on the *Dicta Catonis* rather than translations of it, while one, Caxton’s, is based on a French intermediary. Moreover, the translations in the strictest sense of the word still show much variation, depending on the intended reading public and whether the translator wanted to stress linguistic instruction, moral instruction, or both. It is this diversity that makes the study of the translation activity during the period under discussion so interesting. At the same time, it is also one of the elements that makes it difficult to identify, qualify and catalogue all relevant publications. A further complication arises from the fact that English translations of the *Dicta Catonis* are frequently published in books which also contain translations of other collections of sayings from the ancients. In any case, the findings of this case study question the existence of a truly ‘English Cato’ and demonstrate how inter-connected print and translation were in early modern England.

Appendix

English translations of the *Dicta Catonis* printed before 1641³⁷

1. Verse translation by Benedict Burgh³⁸
 - *Hic incipit paruus Catho* [Westminster: William Caxton, 1476] (STC 4851)
 - *Hic incipit paruus Catho* [Westminster: William Caxton, 1477] (STC 4850)
 - *Hic incipit paruus Catho* [Westminster: William Caxton, 1483] (STC 4852)
 - *The Godly aduertisement or good counsell of the famous orator Isocrates, intituled Paraenesis to Demonicus: wherto is annexed Cato in olde Englysh meter* (London: William Copland, 1557 [i.e. 1558]) (STC 14276)
2. Prose translation by William Caxton
 - *Here begynneth the prologue or prohemye of the book called Caton* [Westminster: William Caxton, 1484] (STC 4853)
3. Prose translation by Richard Taverner
 - *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami una cum annotationibus et scholijs Richardi Tauerneri anglico idiomate conscriptis in usum Anglicae iuuentutis* (London: Richard Taverner, 1540) (STC 4843)

³⁷ This list has been checked against Henriette R. Palmer, *List of English Editions and Translations of Greek and Latin Classics Printed before 1641* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1911), and Robert Cummings and Stuart Gillespie, "Translations from Greek and Latin Classics 1550–1700: A Revised Bibliography," *Translation and Literature* 18 (2009): 1–42, as well as the online *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue of Translations in Britain 1473–1640* (www.hrionline.ac.uk/rcc). The first seven translations have been discussed by Henry Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman, 1477–1620*, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature 35 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1933), Vol. 1, 596–602. The translations by Burgh, Caxton, Barrant, Bullokar and the anonymous *Cato construed* are also discussed in Max Otto Goldberg, *Die Catonischen Distichen während des Mittelalters in der englischen und französischen Literatur. I. Theil: Der englischen Cato* (Leipzig: Joachim & Jüstel, 1883); while those by Burgh, Caxton, Brinsley, Penkethman, Baker, and Bullokar, together with the *Cato construed*, also feature in Ingrid Arvide Brunner, "On Some of the Vernacular Translations of Cato's *Distichs*," in *Helen Adolf Festschrift*, ed. Sheema Z. Buehne James L. Hodge and Lucille B. Pinto (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1968), 99–125. A bibliographic description of the translations based on the edition by Erasmus is found in E.J. Devereux, *Renaissance English Translations of Erasmus. A Bibliography to 1700* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 188–205. The estimated dates of publication were copied from the *English Short Title Catalogue*.

³⁸ Six of the ten translations are in verse. For the practice of translating moral prose texts into English verse, see Robert Cumming's essay in this volume.

- *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami vna cum annotationibus et scholijs Recharidi Tauerneri Anglico idiomata conscriptis in vsum Anglicae iuuenuis [sic]. Aliquot sententiae in signes ex variis collectae scriptoribus per eundem Erasmum. Mimi publiani, cum Anglicis eiusdem Recharidi scholijs, recogniti* (London: Nicholas Hill, 1553) (STC 4844)
- *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami vna cum annotationibus et scholijs Recharidi Tauerneri Anglico idiomata conscriptis in vsum Anglicae iuuentis. Aliquot sententiae in signes ex variis collectae scriptoribus per eundem Erasmum. Mimi publiani, cum Anglicis eiusdem Recharidi scholijs, recogniti* (London: Nicholas Hill, 1553) (STC 4844.2)
- *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami vnà cum annotationibus & scholijs Richardi Tauerneri Anglico idiomate conscriptis in vsum Anglicae iuuentutis. Aliquot sententiae insignes ex varijs collectae scriptoribus per eundem Erasmum. Mimi publiani, cum Anglicis eiusdem Richardi scholijs, recogniti* (London: Robert Caly, 1555) (STC 4844.4)
- *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami una cum annotationibus et scholijs Richarde Tauerneri anglico idiomata conscriptis in vsum Anglicae iuuentis. Aliquot sententiae in signes ex varijs collectae scriptoribus per eundem Erasmum. Mimi Publiani, cum Anglicis eiusdem Richarde scholijs, recogniti* ([London: John Waley], 1562) (STC 4845)
- 4. Verse translation (with prose commentary) by Robert Barrant³⁹
 - *Preceptes of Cato with annotacions of D. Erasmus of Roterodame, very profytable for all men* [London: Richard Grafton, 1545] (STC 4853.5)
 - *Preceptes of Cato wyth annotacions of D. Erasmus of Roerodame [sic], very profitable for all men* ([London: Richard Grafton], 1550) (STC 4853.7)
 - *Preceptes of Cato with annotacions of D. Erasmus of Roterodame vere profitable for all [...]* ([London: Richard Grafton], 1553) (STC 4854)
 - *Preceptes of Cato, with annotacions of D. Erasmus of Roterodame, verye profitable for all menne* ([London: John Tysdale], 1560) (STC 4857)
- 5. Anonymous prose translation
 - *Cato construed, or Catos precepts, with a familiar and easie interpretation. First done in Laten and Frenche by Maturinus Corderius, and now*

³⁹ Robert Cummings and Stuart Gillespie erroneously record an additional reprint of Barrant's translation in 1558 ("Translations from Greek and Latin Classics," 10).

newly englished to the comferte of all young scholers (London: [John Kingston], 1577) (STC 4857.7)

- *Cato construed, or a familiar and easie interpretation vpon Catos morall verses. First doen in Laten and Frenche by Maturinus Corderius, and now newly englished, to the comferte of all young schollers* (London: [John Kingston], 1584) (STC 4858)
- 6. Verse translation by William Bullokar
 - *Aesop's Fables in tru Ortography with Grammar-nots. Her-untoo ar also iooined the short sentences of the wyz Cato im-printed with lyk form and order: both of which Autorz ar translated out-of Latin intoo English* (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1585) (STC 187)
- 7. Prose translation by John Brinsley
 - *Cato translated grammatically; directing for vnderstanding, construing, parsing, making, and proouing the same Latine: and so for continuall practice of the grammaticall analysis and genesis. Done for the good of schooles, and of all desirous to recouer, or keep that which they got in the grammar-schoole, or to increase therein* (London: H.L[ownes], 1612) (STC 4859)
 - *Cato translated grammatically; directing for understanding, construing, parsing, making, and prooving the same Latin* (London: H.L[ownes], 1613) (STC 4859.5)
 - *Cato translated grammatically. Directing for understanding, construing, parsing, making, and proving the same Latin, and so for continuall practice of the grammaticall analysis and genesis. Done for the good of schools, and of all desirous to recover or keep that which the gette in the grammar-school, or to increase therein* (London: H.L[ownes], 1622) (STC 4860)
- 8. Verse translation by John Penkethman
 - *A handful of honesty. Or, Cato in English verse. Whereunto is prefixed a proper preface of the translator, and annexed, a three-fold table directing to varietie 1 Of lessons for all sorts of persons. 2 Of copies for writing-schollers. 3 Of poesies for the house and schoole* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1623) (STC 4861)
 - *Cato in English verse. With a three-fold table directing to varietie. 1. Of lessons for all sorts of persons. 2. Of copies for writing-schollers. 3. Of poesies for the house and schoole. The second edition. With addition of proper titles or heads (answering the first table to euery distich for the more profitable vse of this worke, especially in the English schooles* (London: [G. Purslowe], 1624) (STC 4862)

9. Verse translation by Richard Baker
 - *Cato variegatus or Catoes morall distichs: translated and paraphras'd, with variations of expressing, in English verse* (London: Anne Griffin, 1636) (STC 4863)
10. Verse translation by Walter Gosnold
 - *Marcus Ausonius his foure bookes of morall precepts, intituled Cato: concerning the precepts of common life. Translated out of Latin hexameters into English meter by Walter Gosnold Gentleman, servant unto the right worshipfull Sr. Thomas Bowes of Much-bromley hall in Essex* (London: Edward Griffin, 1638) (STC 4863.5)

